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ROUTING AND RECORD SHEET

SUBJECT: (Optional)

Analysts Conferences on Afghanistan

FROM:

Director of Training and Education
1026 CoFC

EXTENSION

NO.

DD/A Registry

86-1952-X

DATE

17 November 1986

TO: (Officer designation, room number, and building)

DATE

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OFFICER'S INITIALS

COMMENTS (Number each comment to show from whom to whom. Draw a line across column after each comment.)

1. DDA / EXA
7D24 HQS

18 NOV 1986

11/18

jm

Bill -

2. ADDA

18 NOV 1986

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This is worth a few minutes to peruse. As an example of OTE helping the production process (see paragraph 8, especially) and because of inherit interest in finding. Better than reading most long memos.

3. DDA

19 NOV 1986

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4. MS/DA

21 NOV 1986

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copy sent to DDC1

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DDA Reg.

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DD/A REGISTRY
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ROUTING AND RECORD SHEET

SUBJECT: (Optional)

FROM:

William F. Donnelly
Deputy Director for Administration

EXTENSION

NO.

DATE

20 November 1986

TO: (Officer designation, room number, and building)

DATE

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COMMENTS (Number each comment to show from whom to whom. Draw a line across column after each comment.)

1. DDCI

Bob:

The attached Memorandum for the Record describes a jointly sponsored conference involving OTE and the DI. I think it is a good example of how OTE can contribute to improving the work of our analysts.

William F. Donnelly

Attachment

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31 October 1986

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Analysts Conference on Afghanistan

1. On 16 and 18 September, the Afghanistan Branch of the Office of Near Eastern and South Asian Analysis in conjunction with the Office of Training and Education sponsored an analyst conference to reexamine the intelligence problem we face in measuring the Afghan war. The conference's main objective was to slow the thinking process down, reexamine our assumptions, and see if by systematically taking apart the problem, we could come up with new insights on how to measure progress or change in the war. [] OTE, did a tremendous job in instructing us and facilitating our discussions. In addition to representatives from all DDI offices that follow Afghanistan--NESA, SOVA, LDA, OGI--and NPIC, [] a methodologist from DDS&T Office of Research and Methodology, participated in the conference. []

2. The afternoon of the 16th was largely devoted to examining our assumptions about the war in Afghanistan and defining the question we would be working on at the Airlee House. After much discussion, the analysts decided to frame the intelligence problem as follows: How do we measure who is winning the war in Afghanistan? During subsequent sessions on Thursday, analysts split into three teams to examine the war from the perspective of the major players: the Soviets, the Kabul regime, and the insurgents. We were asked first to draw up a list of each player's goals in the war and to rank these hierarchically. Next we drew up a list of indicators that would show whether or not each player was meeting its goals. Finally, we devised an "objective" list of indicators of progress in the war by ranking the most important factors to all three players. []

3. Each group ranked its goals as follows, in declining order of importance:

Afghan Regime Goals:

- Defeat or contain the Insurgency.
- Build strong military and political institutions.
- Obtain more international recognition (diplomatic, aid and trade)
- Build a socialist state (modernize)
- Gain popular support.
- End outside support for the insurgents.
- Keeping Soviet support and managing it well.

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Soviet Goals in Afghanistan:

- Not losing face; keeping up its image in Third World.
- Maintain a buffer (border security, contain Islam, keep US out)
- Improving/Retaining Influence in the Middle East and South Asia.
- Gain military experience for its armed forces.
- Legitimize the war to the Soviet population.
- Military victory
- Have the Afghans take over the war.

Afghan Insurgent Goals:

- Get the Soviets out (or bleed them if they stay put).
- Smash the Kabul regime (PDPA, Army, KHAD)
- Establish territorial control.
- Gain international recognition.
- Improve unity.

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4. The group that evaluated insurgent goals also outlined Pakistani and US goals (during this session only) to identify similarities and differences with the insurgents' goals.

Pakistani Goals:

- Get the Soviets out.
- Get the refugees to return to Afghanistan.
- Establish a "friendly" government in Kabul.
- Keep the resistance fragmented.
- Keep US support.
- If the Soviets cannot be driven out, the Pakistanis would be somewhat more willing to handle the refugee problem by negotiating a coalition government.

US Goals:

- Get the Soviets out.
- Establish a non-aligned, if not pro-West, government.
- Bleed the Soviets.
- Keep the Pakistanis involved in supporting the war. --If the Soviets cannot be driven out, the US would want to increase the pressure on Moscow and gain influence in any coalition government that is formed.

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5. Each group next devised a list of indicators that would show how well each side was meeting its goals. These were as follows:

Indicators of Afghan Regime Success:

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- More local participation in government (PDPA, NFF, etc.)
- Increased military or political control of territory
- Firm statements of, and follow through on, Soviet support (economic, political, military).
- More effective national reconciliation, as measured by defections of tribal, refugee, or resistance leaders.
- A move toward Communism with an Islamic facade.
- More independent, successful Afghan army operations.
- Better socioeconomic conditions.
- increased acceptance of the regime in international fora.
- Decline in army desertions.
- Decline in external support for the resistance.
- A drastic change in insurgency tactics--such as a move into terrorism--that would indicate a last ditch effort by the resistance

Indicators of Soviet Success:

In the international arena:

- Wider international recognition of the Kabul regime; broader international support for the Soviet position.
- Decline of support for Afghan resolutions at the NAM, UNGA, OIC.
- Less criticism of Soviets in international fora.
- Improved relations with US, Iran, PRC, Pakistan.
- Increased success of Soviet foreign policy: arms talks, Asian security proposal, if Soviets became a major player in mideast issues.
- Decrease in anti-Soviet propaganda.

In winning the war:

- Improvements in DRA Army performance.
- Decline in support for the insurgents.
- Decline in insurgent supplies.
- Decline in Soviet combat losses.
- Better urban security.
- More defections to the regime (as an indicator of more popular support for the regime)
- Decline in influence of Islam.
- Decline in insurgent unity.
- Decline in insurgent fighting.
- Return of the Afghan refugees from Pakistan &/or Iran.

In Domestic Support for War:

- Less draft dodging.
- Less appeal for Islam.
- More economic resources.

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- Less casualties.
- Less need for non-military aid.

Indicators of Insurgent Success:

- Improved military capability, as shown by casualties on DRA/Soviet side, DRA/Soviet aircraft losses, mujahidin territorial gains, better intelligence
- More popular support.
- Availability of supplies and ability to mobilize them (both n food and weapons)
- More international recognition (at UN, OIC, etc.)
- Better cooperation and leadership.
- Economic performance of DRA, i.e. their inability to deliver goods and services.

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6. Analysts next developed a "grand model" of progress in the war by selecting the ten most important, "objective" indicators of who was winning the war. Each analyst submitted his/her list and the votes were tallied.

The following indicators were selected:

- Increased Afghan regime combat effectiveness.
- Decreased Soviet combat losses (casualties, equipment)
- Better Afghan military and political control of territory.
- Better international recognition for the DRA.
- Better Mujahidin military capability (hold territory, inflict losses)
- Better Mujahidin cooperation and leadership.
- Availability of supplies to resistance and its ability to move them.
- Better international support for the Mujahidin.
- More credible defectors to the regime (refugee, resistance, tribal).
- Regime ability to move along socialist past in an "islamic" mode (as a measure of popular support).

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7. The analysts then tried to determine what, if anything, has changed in each of these indicators in the last six months to a year.

- Although analysts noted that there were less people in the rural areas than there used to be, all agreed that the regime's position had on balance declined. Kabul media admitted its own failures in achieving national reconciliation and the replacement of Babrak Karmal had increased party factionalism. The insurgents had also suffered some, although less significant, declines in support as shown by their need to carry food to civilians in-country, tensions in the NWFP, and some signs of war weariness among the civilian population.

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- Analysts agreed there was no improvement in DRA combat capability. Analysts noted some better equipment for the DRA army, but no major battlefield successes; even the temporary takeover of the resistance base camp at Zhawar Kili was bought at great cost.
- There was a difference of views as to whether insurgent combat capability was slightly better or slightly worse. OIA argued that there was a slight decrease in capability--as measured by Commander Masood's departure from the Panjsher--but that it was perhaps not a significant one. Other analysts felt that there was a slight improvement in the insurgent position, as noted by more and better equipment and training, a more effective choice of dramatic targets, and a strong insurgent performance in Qandahar and Herat. All agreed that it is getting more costly to keep supply routes open.
- Analysts agreed that the DRA has gained nothing in the international sphere.
- Insurgent unity was judged to be a mixed bag. Analysts noted that the alliance has survived--something which we perhaps would not have judged with confidence a year ago--and had appeared at the UNGA and the OIC. Tactical cooperation is improving in-country, but alliance political infighting continues unabated. Analysts judged that perhaps there was a slight net gain for the insurgents.
- International support for the insurgents. Some gains were noted, particularly the fact that Pakistani support remains stable and that the resistance alliance had a presence at the UNGA and the OIC. The Rabbani-led delegation to US, Saudi Arabia and France--although fractious from the point of view of alliance politics--was received at high level abroad and irked Moscow.
- Analysts judged that territorial control had not changed much and was not really important to the insurgents at this stage of the conflict. Denial of regime control was significant.
- Soviet military successes. Analysts judged that Moscow was probably satisfied with certain aspects of its strategy, particularly its ability to interdict insurgent supply lines. But regime leadership weaknesses and the poor performance of the Afghan army were significant liabilities for the Soviets.

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8. In conclusion, the most interesting insights from the conference derived from the initial delineation of goals--a simple exercise that fed a series of later insights and judgments. Most analysts were surprised to see the sharp divergence between Afghan regime and Soviet goals--a theme which came up again and again during the conference. The divergence of

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these objectives suggests that there is room for the US to exploit the inherent tensions in the relationship between Moscow and Kabul. It also exposes Moscow's most important dilemma in Afghanistan--its INABILITY TO DISENGAGE EVEN IF IT WANTED TO because of the weaknesses of its client. Analysts agreed that the most effective way of RAISING THE COSTS FOR MOSCOW involved HITTING REGIME TARGETS FIRST, then Soviet targets, and denying the Soviets a legitimate client state. In this regard, Moscow viewed the costs insurgent alliance diplomatic activities as disproportionately greater than we might objectively assess them. On balance, analysts did not believe that there were significant "turning points" in the war during the last year or so--the conflict remains an increasingly bloody and difficult stalemate, with no single side gaining a decisive edge.

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Afghanistan Branch
Office of Near Eastern & South Asian Analysis

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